ASHISH RAICHUR

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God is a GOOD GOD!

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1. Our Picture Of God

Our picture of God is "developed" through a variety of sources—what others have said about God, what we conclude because of experiences, observations, reading, analyses, and so on. But not all of these may be correct! For instance, insurance companies have disclaimers that refer to catastrophic weather conditions—earthquakes, cyclones, and hurricanes—as "acts of God." When we are exposed to such reasoning, we begin to develop an inaccurate understanding of God. We develop the notion that it is God who routinely causes cyclones, earthquakes, and other catastrophes.

Even after we are saved and have been Christians for a long time, our picture of God may be warped, incomplete, or inaccurate. We may not have the true picture of God. Based on our past experiences, we tend to retain many of our biases, misconceptions, and wrong notions of who God is, what He does, and how He works. Sometimes even what we may have heard in religious places, read in religious books could have misrepresented God to us and may have resulted in us having a wrong and inaccurate picture of God. We may even think we are right, but really our picture of God may be incorrect.

2. THE TRUE PICTURE OF GOD UNVEILED

Romans 1:20–23
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

God's nature has been revealed to us in His creation. His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and Godhead are clearly seen and understood through His creation. Creation speaks of the glory of its Creator (Psalm 19:1–3). However, the sad thing is that people began to worship "creation" instead of the "Creator." While we can learn about the Creator by observing His creation, we must be careful not to make a god out of creation itself.

2 Timothy 3:16
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Apart from creation, we have God's Word—the Bible—that unveils to us the true picture of God, because the Bible is the book that God wrote. All Scripture has been given to us by the inspiration of God. We know that all Scripture is God-breathed and God-inspired. God's hand was upon the people who wrote the Scripture and, therefore, the Bible is a self-revelation of God and who He is—His qualities and attributes.

We read about the many qualities and attributes of God in the Bible:

- God is self-existent—He does not depend on anything else for His existence.
- God is eternal—Even before time, He was and always will be.
- God is the Creator—He created everything.
- God is all-powerful—He is omnipotent.
- God is all-wisdom and all-knowing—He is omniscient.
- God is ever-present everywhere—He is omnipresent. His presence pervades all time and space.
- God is a personal Spirit Being—He is a Spirit being, but He is personal. He has emotions and feelings.
- God is Infinite—He is beyond all measure.

- God is immutable—He is unchangeable. We grow old and develop certain personality traits that may also change. But God is the same. He does not need to mature.
- God is sovereign—He does not need to with consult you and me. He does what He pleases.
- God is holy.
- God is righteous.
- God is just.
- God is a God of truth.
- God is a God of love.
- God is a God of goodness—He is a good God, and it is this attribute that we will be studying, in the following chapters.

3. Important Truths About God

Here are some important truths about God:

God's Will Is Always In Harmony With His Nature—Who He Is

If we know who God is, we will know what His will is. His will for us can never be contrary to His nature or who He is. If we sometimes say that we do not know what God's will is, it may be that we do not know who He is. For example, we do not fast and pray to find out if it is God's will to forgive sins! We just approach God knowing that it is His nature to forgive and God will forgive sin. The same applies in the case of a sick person. It is God's will to heal the sick person, for He is the Healer and His will is always in harmony with His nature, for He will never contradict His nature. So, it is His will to heal every sick person. He said, "*I Am Jehovah Rapha*," thereby revealing His nature as the God who heals.

God Does Everything In Harmony With His Nature And Character

Therefore, if we know who He is, we will know what He does. Those who are married will understand this better. My wife, Amy, can predict what I am thinking, how I would behave, and what I would do in a particular situation, for she knows me. Over a period, she has understood my nature and character. Likewise, when we know God, we know what He does. What He does will be in harmony with His nature and character.

As we stated earlier, the Bible reveals God to us. Therefore, it is to our benefit to read the Bible to understand who God is—what His nature and character are.

God Does Not Say Or Do Anything That Is Self-Contradictory Or Contrary To His Nature And Character

God does not say, "I Am the God of Truth, but I sometimes lie." Also, He can never say, "I Am a good God but sometimes I do bad things." So, He will never do anything that is contrary to His nature. This makes it simple for us to find out if what we are hearing is from God, the devil, or just us. It is simple to determine this, for if what we are hearing is in line with His nature and character, then it is of God. If it is contrary to His nature, then it is not from God. Therefore, if we know who He is, we will know what He says and does.

God's Power Is Absolutely Limitless And Yet There Are Certain Things God Will Not Do

God has declared that there are certain things that He will not do. For example:

- God cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).
- He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- He cannot sin (James 1:13).

He cannot do these because these are contrary to His nature. He will never be unfaithful, lie, or stop loving.

God Will Not Override The Free Moral Will (Freedom To Choose) Which He Has Given To People

In His sovereignty, God has chosen not to override our free moral wills—our freedom to choose good or evil. That is why He did not stop Adam and Eve from sinning. If God overrides our free moral wills, we would not be human beings but robots. And God did not create robots. He created people in His own image to whom He gave free wills. He will NEVER override our free wills—our freedom to choose. He will influence, correct, teach, guide, work in us, give us His Word, and empower us by His Spirit but will never make the choice for us. That is why God allows people to go to hell. It is His will for all to be saved, but people still choose to go to hell. God never told some people to go to hell and some others to go to heaven. That would be partial. People make choices. So, when we say God is in control, in general terms He is. But specifically, God is not in control of our free wills or the choices we make on earth. If we decide to do something foolish or destructive—that is our choice.

4. GOD IS A GOOD GOD

Among the many things that the Scripture reveals to us about God, there is one unmistakable truth that is repeated throughout—God is a good God!

Psalm 34:8
Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Psalm 100:5
For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; And His truth endures to all generations.

Psalm 107:1,8
1 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.
8 Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

We usually give thanks to God and praise Him for His goodness when everything is wonderful. However, when things are "not so wonderful," we tend to think that God has stopped being good. When we pray for a couple of hours at the beginning of a day, we tend to think that God is going to be very good to us that day. But, when we pray only for a few minutes the next day, we tend to think that He may not be good to us. We are all guilty of thinking, at some point or the other, that God's goodness is somehow dependent on how long we pray. But God is good because of who He is and will be good to us, whether we pray or not.

Some of us think God is good only to Christians but the Scripture says:

Psalm 145:8-9
8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.
9 The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works

The Lord is good to all. Even to the ones who may persecute us. God is good to the sinner not just to the churchgoer!

Matthew 5:45
That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Therefore we can pray for sinners who are in a mess, and still ask God to pour out His goodness on them. God is good to all. There is no need to tell the sinner to clean up and get his act together, before he can come to church for God to be good to him. God is "*good to all and His mercies and compassion are over all His works*" (Psalm 145:9). Let

the sinner come to God just as he is—sin, mess, and all—and the goodness of God will lead him to repentance (Romans 2:4).

And because God is a good God, He desires good things for us. He can never contradict Himself by saying, "I Am a good God, but I want bad things for you." What He says, does, and wills are always good.

Because God Is A Good God, He Is A Generous Giver

Matthew 7:7–11
7 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?
10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?
11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

If earthly fathers can give good things for their children, then do not underestimate the Father-heart of God. God is the ultimate Father. And if we, though evil, treat our children with such love and care, then I can guarantee that God, who is infinitely greater, wants good things for His children.

James 1:17
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Psalm 84:11
For the Lord God is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

God is a giver of good and perfect gifts. He will not withhold good things from us.

5. Jesus Christ—The True Representation Of The Invisible God

Colossians 1:15
He is the image of the invisible God, …

2 Corinthians 4:4
… Christ, who is the image of God, …

Hebrews 1:3
Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Jesus is the exact representation of the personhood of God—of His will, of His mind, and of His feelings. When Jesus walked the earth, He was never evil in what He did. When the sick came to Him, He never turned them away but healed them all. He multiplied the loaves and fish to feed people—to meet their material needs. He thus showed us who God is and that God is indeed interested in our earthly lives.

Matthew 15:22
And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

Matthew 20:30
And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

The woman of Canaan and the two blind men made a demand on Jesus' mercy, to have compassion on them. In His goodness, their needs were met, and they were healed. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the true representation of who God is. We too can make a demand on the goodness of God and experience His goodness every day.

Remind Yourselves Of These

- God's will is always in harmony with His nature—who He is.

Therefore, if you know WHO HE IS, you will also know WHAT HIS WILL IS. Some people dread the will of God, as if it is something terrible. Submitting to the will of God is the best thing that could happen to you, for His will for you is always good. Be happy!

- God does everything in harmony with His nature and character.

Therefore, if you know WHO HE IS, you will know WHAT HE DOES. You can boldly say that God does good things. Of course, He will warn you and correct you, but it will all be done for your good.

- God does not say or do things that are self-contradictory or contrary to His nature and character.

God will never say bad things to you or prophesy over you saying, "You will go to hell." He only speaks good things and does good things. God is too good to do you wrong, too wise to make a mistake, too true to lie to you, and too strong to let you down.

But If God Is A Good God, Why Do Bad Things Happen In This World?

Newspapers bring us news everyday about people dying because of natural calamities like floods, hurricanes, other reasons like terrorist activities, crimes in the city, and so on. So, if God is a good God, why do bad things happen? And why do bad things happen to good people?

God is a good God but there is a bad devil (satan) on the earth. It is the devil who goes about influencing, initiating, and causing evil. Sadly, people knowingly or unknowingly become satan's agents to carry out evil on the earth. The devil gained access into the world through Adam's sin. The earth was given to Adam and he transferred control of the earth over to satan through disobedience to God. However, this is for a limited time. That is why the devil is working feverishly on the earth right now (Revelation 12:12). There is "the time" (Matthew 8:29) when satan's control will end and the devil and his demons will be expelled from the earth. The book of Revelation unveils what God has planned for satan and his demons (Revelation 20:10,14).

Luke 8:22–25
22 Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.
23 But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.
24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.
25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!

Jesus and His disciples were in the middle of a storm (Luke 8:22–25). In the natural realm, the disciples did what they could. When it got out of hand and they thought that they were going to end in a watery grave, they woke up Jesus. Jesus did not get up to say a final prayer, assuming that it was the Father's will for them to die in a storm! Instead, He walked up boldly to the front of the boat and rebuked the winds and storm, and there was a great calm. We need to ask the question—who caused the storm? Was

it God, the devil, or nature at work?

It could not have been God because otherwise Jesus would be fighting against the will of the Father. So, it could only have been the devil at work or nature causing the storm. God has set certain laws in motion. An apple thrown into the air comes down, not because God pushes it back down to earth, but because of gravity. He has set the laws of nature at work. But satan can work in natural elements. In Job, Chapters 1 and 2, we read that satan went out from the presence of the Lord and caused certain catastrophes, to destroy Job's family and belongings. Do not blame God for catastrophes that happen, because He is good all the time. These catastrophes could be caused by the devil or the natural laws that are at work.

God is not good one day and bad on another day. He IS good all the time!

When Jesus rebuked the storm, He did not turn around to His disciples and ask them why they did not go to church that day. What He did ask was, "Where is your faith?" Even in the raging storm, He knew that they could have stood up and taken authority over it, with their faith. Similarly, some of us going through storms in our lives may be blaming God for them. Stop blaming God! Let us take authority over them, arise, and say that we will bring them down by our faith in our good God. It is not our good God who is causing storms to sink our lives. God has allowed the devil to operate on earth for a period, but He has not abandoned us, leaving us helpless. He has given us faith, an armor to wear, and His Word, by which we can live overcoming victorious Christian lives.

Since God is also a just God, there is the concept of justice and judgment. But those are for the times when we violate the law of God and walk outside His boundaries.

God's desire is that we WORSHIP Him for who He is (give thanks and praise to Him for who HE is), that we LIVE in conformance to who He is (HE is holy, so we are to be holy; HE is good, so we are to be good to one another; our lifestyles and behavior should be in conformance to our good God) and that we EXPERIENCE the fullness of who He is (He wants us to receive of His fullness). "*And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace*" (John 1:16).

We can experience the goodness of God in our lives. "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"* (Psalm 23:6a).

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All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out all across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people, and Christian Leaders conferences are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of books are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

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About All Peoples Church

At All Peoples Church (APC), our vision is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore and a voice to the nation of India and to the nations of the world.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology, and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4-5; Hebrews 2:3-4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is Holy Spirit power, our passion is people, and our goal is Christlike maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at **www.apcwo.org/locations** or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

DO YOU KNOW THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the Earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All of these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy, and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, *"***For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so He came, to provide a way for the entire human race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him whole-heartedly.

"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

… "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins, so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I make a decision to believe in You and to accept what You did for me, by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins..

Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You.
Amen.

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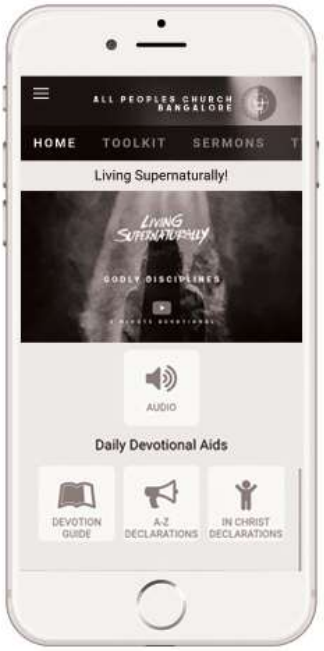

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Our picture of God is "developed" through a variety of sources—what others have said about God, what we conclude as a result of experiences, observations, reading, analyses, and so on. But not all of these may be correct!

Based on our past experiences, we tend to retain many of our biases, misconceptions, and wrong notions of who God is, what He does and how He works. Sometimes even what we may have heard in religious places, read in religious books could have misrepresented God to us and may have resulted in us having a wrong and inaccurate picture of God. Very often we even think that God could be mean and cruel.

This book paints a fresh picture of God, showing us from the Bible that God is a good God.

Ashish Raichur

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